



## **Bare Cove Park: Proposed Changes to current Dog Regulations; September 3, 2015**

Overview .....	2
The Problem .....	4
Hingham's Article 17 Compared to Other South Shore Towns .....	5
Other Parks: Trustees OR and DCR .....	7
Other Parks: Urban Cities and Towns .....	14
Review of Problems in Bare Cove Park .....	15
<b>BETTER ENFORCEMENT, Fines, Signs, Education and Training</b>	

## Overview

This document is the result of 8 months of research, public outreach, written comments and suggestions from the public received and vetted, newspaper articles, public comment at public meetings, and public discussions amongst the Bare Cove Park Committee. Over this time period, committee members and Selectmen have changed. The seasons and the dynamics of the BCP property, it's users, and usage have and will continue to change. The last time that the BCP Committee (with the approval of the Selectmen) updated the Dog Regulations in the park was in 2011. The one thing that we all know is that change is inevitable. The demographics of BCP have changed dramatically. We believe that we are managing a dog park. We propose that Hingham's bylaw Article 17 needs to be updated to keep in line with Weymouth, Hull, and Cohasset's strict 6 foot leash laws. Some areas friendly to off leash dogs within Bare Cove Park may close, tighter rules will be presented to ensure the safety and security of ALL park visitors. We will be asking for the Selectmen, the Town Administrators, the Town's Animal Control Officer, and the new Police Chiefs help and support in enforcing the proposed regulations fairly, but properly. This report should be considered a reasonable snap-shot of human and wildlife interaction with for the most part unleashed dogs within the park. We will refer to dog owners and commercial dog walkers as Dog Guardians throughout this report. The report is a summary of the results of our research along with the MAJORITY of the opinions expressed by the current Committee and the Committee Chairman who put together this presentation.

People who visit Bare Cove Park both with and without dogs want and deserve to be able to enjoy this beautiful property without being bothered by unruly adults, uncontrolled dogs, misbehaving children, or bicycles being driven way too fast. People should not have to worry about the presence of dog waste left on the paved roads and woodland paths, aggressive dogs and their irresponsible (and sometimes belligerent) guardians. Neighbors simply want Park visitors to stay in the Park, and to enjoy it quietly. Lack of compliance with dog rules regarding control and picking up dog waste has been taxing staff resources and visitor's patience. We have been forced to post signs with detailed rules with fines as a penalty to ease frictions caused by the bad manners of some dog owners. Rules and Fines are no good unless they are enforced. The public has received hundreds of verbal warnings from the park ranger, volunteers, and the ACO, but the problems still exist.

A Park that allows off-leash dogs easily becomes a “Dog Park”. Bare Cove Park’s problems with dog owners are typical and the Committee’s efforts so far to address the problems are similar to other parks’ attempts. Posting a large sign at each of the 4 gates about picking-up dog waste has gotten attention and positive results. We believe that posting clearer rules with the fines outlined on larger signs at each gate will make it more obvious what is expected of people who want to enjoy Bare Cove Park with their dogs.

The proposed new regulations;

- All dogs must be leashed on the weekends. \$50 fine
- All dogs must be leashed between parking areas and the yellow lines inside the park: \$50 fine
- No more than 2 dogs per person. Fine \$50
- Commercial dog walkers must be permitted by The Bare Cove Park Committee. \$50 fine
- Dogs must wear current rabies tag: \$50 fine
- Dog waste must be picked up and properly disposed of: \$50 fine
- Dog Guardian must carry a leash\* for each dog: \$50 fine, electronic collar is not a substitute
- Dogs must be under control and at the Dog Guardians side at all times: \$50 fine
- Dogs may not trespass on private property: \$50 fine
- Dogs may not disturb other Park visitors, neighbors, or wildlife: \$50 fine
- Playing fields within the park (Lynch and Carlson) are leash only. \$50 fine
- Dogs may only swim in the area in front of and to the left of the green dock house building. \$50 fine
- Designated areas of the park including the South End (Conservatory and Back River Paths, Indian Point), and Tucker Swamp are leash only areas. \$50 fine

**Fines are cumulative, and apply to each dog involved. Owners are personally liable for any damage or injury caused by their dog.**

These rules are in some ways more restrictive than Hingham’s “Dog Regulations” (Article 17). They do however conform with bylaws of other towns, Mass General Law, and rules at other parks. The proposed fines will not

affect the good dog owners who regularly practice this standard dog etiquette, and it only seems fair that people who choose to ignore the basic rules should pay a price. There is a saying: “People may not do what you expect, but they will likely do what you inspect.” We need the threat of fines and penalties to be real by improving enforcement.

### **The Problem: Too Many/Too Often/Too Much . . . Enough is Enough**

Bare Cove Park is one of the few open spaces left where people may walk with dogs under voice control throughout the entire 480+ acres of riverfront and woodland property. One would think that people with dogs would be very careful to keep this park safe and clean so they could continue to enjoy it with their pets. But that has not been the case, so the Committee has little choice but to make some changes. Like other Parks in Massachusetts, Bare Cove Park has had its fair share of complaints about people who bring dogs here for exercise. Considering the availability of dog training classes (at various price-points), books and free internet resources, it is hard for many to understand how some dog owners can be unaware of basic etiquette when out in public. Since 2007, the Bare Cove Park Committee and the Hingham ACO have spent much time and energy trying to educate dog owners and Commercial Dog Walkers about the importance of having dogs always under control and to always pick up dog waste, with varying degrees of success.

Many Parks are cracking down on bad behavior. Some – particularly in densely populated areas – have carved out small areas in small parks to separate dog owners from other visitors. Some have instituted the *Green Dog Program*, which requires registration and usually fees, and also limits the number of dogs per person. In Boston, Somerville, Cambridge and Brookline, where dogs must be leashed anywhere outside the owners’ property and open space is precious, these enclosed spaces (from 1/3 of an acre – 2 acres) are cause for celebration and are also a good sign for potential and already-formed Dog Owners Groups in South Shore towns. The successful small „dog parks” or „off-leash recreational areas” (OLRAs ) are usually funded and maintained by charging annual usage fees or by private Dog Owners groups (many with 501(c)(3) status). When the larger Parks, like those maintained by the MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation or the Trustees of Reservations, implement the *Green Dog program* or carve out small dog runs, it usually means that dog owners lose some or all off-leash access to Park trails. In the last few years, the number of dogs per person has become an issue. It seems that more Commercial Dog Walkers have been bringing more of their canine business clients to more public spaces. People with and without

dogs can become intimidated or uncomfortable when they see people approaching with a large group of unleashed dogs 6-8, under control or not, and they express their concerns to that park's management or other officials. Reasonable people – trainers, public safety officials, breeders, dog owners and many park visitors – question any one person's ability to control, account for, and pick-up after more than two or three off-leash dogs in a public park. A few Dog Walking businesses advertise "playgroups in the park" here, but it is not clear whether the dog owners are aware of how big a group their pet is in, or if they are informed of any instances when their pet is out of control in a public place.

There have been too many instances of bites, broken bones and other injuries – to humans, dogs, other pets and wildlife – here, and situations that are making too many people too uncomfortable to come to the park. We want to reach out to those people and assure them that the park is under control. The dog Guardians need to help us in that regard. This park is not an exclusive dog walking club. People with dogs must police themselves better here, or yet another wonderful open space will soon be lost to off-leash dog walking.

<b>ARTICLE 17</b>	<b>Towns HINGHAM</b>	<b>WEY</b>	<b>HUL</b>	<b>COH</b>	<b>NOR</b>	<b>QUI</b>	<b>BTREE</b>	<b>ROCK</b>	<b>HAN</b>	<b>PEMB</b>	<b>SCI</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>DUX</b>
SEC 1.	No owner shall permit dog to go anywhere off their own property unless under control	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SEC 1.	Control: leash or voice control deemed acceptable by ACO	leash; max 6"	leash; max 7"	leash	Leash, or voice + visual	leash	leash; max 10"	leash or at heel	leash; max 7"	leash	leash	leash	Leash or voice

The data above is the result of on-line research of bylaws and ACO web pages available on Town websites. Most town bylaws have something about dogs “not allowed to be at large in town” or “not allowed on any property other than the owner’s without express permission of other property owner”. Disturbing the peace – by barking, biting, running at large, jumping, damaging property, chasing cars, etc. – is sometimes classified as a “nuisance” in some bylaws. Several towns specify fines for violations of Dog Regulations in their bylaws on-line, others do not. Fines listed are typically scaled: 1st offense - warning-\$25; 2nd - \$25-\$50; 3rd & subsequent - \$50-\$100; highest found - \$200. “At heel” generally means that a dog has been trained to walk with its right shoulder next to but not touching the owner’s left leg, staying within the owners’ stride (i.e., within about 3 feet in front or behind the owner).

Some of the area towns’ bylaws specify items not included in Hingham’s Article 17, such as: dogs not allowed at all on some town athletic fields, cemeteries, or schoolyards; a few towns specify a vehicle as a control mechanism; only one town bans particular breeds (pit-bull type) from living in town. Some towns specify rules about female dogs in heat; a few note some rules should not impact the keeping / training of hunting dogs.

Since off-leash walking is allowed in so few towns, it is easy to understand why many people bring dogs to Bare Cove Park. But, it seems odd that so many people can be unaware of nuisance behavior, trespass, control by leash, having collar & tags, and picking up dog waste

The **Trustees of Reservations (TOR)** preserve, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts, with 125 Massachusetts properties listed at <http://www.thetrustees.org/> Some TOR properties posted regulations do not allow dogs at all, others allow off-leash walking under voice control or specify areas or times of day/year when off-leash walking is permitted; some require that dogs be leashed at all times. Where dog walking is permitted, people are asked to follow posted regulations and observe the following rules of etiquette:

- ☐ Keep dogs under control at all times.
- ☐ Keep dogs on trails so they do not disturb wildlife or livestock or damage vegetation.
- ☐ Do not take dogs into areas marked as restricted for management and resource protection reasons.
- ☐ Yield to equestrians.
- ☐ Carry plastic bags with you, pick up your dog's waste, and dispose of it in trash receptacles or off the property.
- ☐ Walk with no more than two dogs per person.
- ☐ Recognize that many people have little contact with dogs and may be afraid of your dog regardless of its size or demeanor.

These are the rules at some local Trustees properties;

<b>Local Trustees Properties;</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>acres</b>	<b>Specified Policy about dogs</b>
Norris Reservation	Norwell	129	Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times
Two Mile Farm	Marshfield	68	same
Turkey Hill	Hingham & Cohasset	62	Included with Whitney and Thayer Woods
Weir River Farm	Hingham	75	Dogs are not permitted
Whitney and Thayer Woods	Hingham & Cohasset	824	Dogs must be under voice control or kept on a leash at all times
World"s End	Hingham	251	Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times

- ☐ Dog owners must be able to show an up-to-date rabies tag for their pet(s).
- ☐ Dog walkers must have their dogs under control at all times and must not be allowed to approach other visitors unless invited to do so.
- ☐ One person may walk no more than two dogs; the walker must have a separate leash for each dog.
- ☐ Do not allow your dog to wander off the permitted dog walking trails, or to chase, hunt, or harass people, wildlife, other dogs, or horses.
- ☐ Dog walkers must pick up and dispose of their dogs" wastes.



□ Trustees’ staff will monitor compliance with the Green Dogs regulations, and permits may be canceled for permit holders who are not in compliance or whose Trustees membership is lapsed. **MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)** lists 150 properties on its website [www.mass.gov/dcr/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/index.htm) DCR manages over 310,900 acres, with properties ranging in size from a tiny foot bridge (0.1 acre) to massive State Forests (October Mountain State Forest in Lee, MA is the largest, at 16,460 acres). DCR parks provide many outdoor activities that appeal to various interests. The larger Parks often have many different stakeholders (campers, hikers, mountain bikers, hunters & fisherman, cyclists, equestrians, birders, runners, naturalists, kayakers/canoes, skiers, historians). ***Per DCR CMR 350.2.01(g): dog waste must be picked up, dogs must be on leash 7 ft long or less; and (n): No one shall engage in a business without permit.*** Locally, **Wompatuck State Park** (3,578 acres) and **Stodders Neck** (26 acres) appear as “dog parks”,

*Wompatuck State Park* has many campers, runners, cyclists and hunters, mountain biking and equestrian groups, and also supports snowmobiling and dog sledding. There is a link to rules for acceptable behavior by people with dogs – dogs must be leashed in the listed developed areas, and waste picked up – on the park’s DCR web page. Mountain bikers and equestrians typically police themselves by following guidelines set by national/regional organizations. As big as Wompatuck is, other users still have complaints about some dog owners and commercial dog walkers who don’t pick-up after or control the dogs they bring. Recently, it was necessary to post large signs about picking up dog waste; the resulting compliance surpassed expectations. Bare Cove Park is the recipient of a donation of four of these signs, posted in early October 2011 at four gates at the Park. The sign is a reminder to pick up your dog waste. It didn’t work very well in the winter of 2014-15!! Only dog owners visit *Stodders Neck*, where the sign about leashing dogs (\$100.00+ fine) has long been ignored, dog fights and rude owners are common, and picking-up dog waste is the exception rather than the rule. A few years ago, DCR management posted signs in the entrance kiosk

disallowing for-profit business on Park property (“vendors and dog walkers take notice”) without a permit. More recently, signs appeared in the kiosk that no dog bowls are to be left in the park, dogs must be leashed and waste picked-up. Some people report seeing compliance with the new rules here; some believe that offenders from Stodders Neck are now coming to Bare Cove Park.

Three other DCR properties appear often on doggie websites and in Yelp.com postings as „dog parks”: **Breakheart Reservation** (652 acres in Saugus), **Callahan State Park** (820 acres in Framingham) and the **Sheepfold (10 acres) in the Middlesex Fells Reservation** (2,283 acres spanning Malden, Medford, Stoneham, Melrose and Winchester).

*Breakheart Reservation* is the home of “Bark Place – a leash-free Barking Lot”, built as a co-operative effort between the DCR and The Friends of Breakheart (<http://www.saugus.org/FOBR/>) by reclaiming an abandoned parking lot bounded by hemlocks. A Yelp.com reviewer describes Bark Place as “about the size of a little league infield”. Bark Place rules, which include a maximum of 2 dogs per handler, control and waste pick-up, are posted at the FOBR website. This is the only area where owners are allowed to walk with off-leash dogs.

*Callahan State Park* has earned a reputation as “a beautiful park that went to the dogs”. In September 2006, after receiving a number of complaints, the DCR considered rescinding the off-leash policy throughout Callahan State Park unless dog owners improved their behavior. By October 2006, the Callahan Canine Owners’ Association, a not-for-profit Massachusetts organization doing business as the Callahan Dog Owners Group (<http://callahandogs.com/>) was formed. Currently, dogs must be leashed on the hiking paths and in other sections. The group’s mission is to make Callahan State Park the best multi-use park in the Massachusetts State Park System and to do what they can to keep remaining off-leash privileges in effect. Callahan does not limit number of dogs per person, but recently, dog owners are required to leash their dog immediately at the request of another visitor until they safely pass.

*The Middlesex Fells Reservation* published a draft RMP (Resource Management Plan)

[www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/rmp-midfells.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/rmp-midfells.htm) This pleasant-to-read 90-page document gives a good overview of the challenges of running a large public park in a densely populated area. Five times larger than Bare Cove Park, The Fells’ has similar problems with bad-mannered dog owners. As of December 2010, “*dogs are*

*currently welcome on-leash with their owners on all official trails at The Fells, and the reservation is a popular destination for dog-owners to bring their dogs to exercise and socialize. Within a 5-mile radius of The Fells, there are 343,828 households. Approximately 35% of households own an average of 1.7 dogs. Consequently, as many as 204,000 dogs may live in households within 5 miles of The Fells. Based on DCR trailhead counts at The Fells itself, we have approximately one dog for every two people visiting the reservation (or the same number of feet and paws). DCR is also working to establish and manage a pilot, designated off-leash area at the Sheepfold. The RMP concludes that there is a potential for impacts to sensitive resources, public safety and recreational experiences from additional off-leash dog opportunities at The Fells, and therefore does not recommend any additional opportunities beyond the designated area at the Sheepfold at this time.”*

The RMP reports that there is a broad disregard for the rules exhibited by a majority of people and across the spectrum of users at The Fells. *“This culture of non-compliance is one of the most significant management issues at The Fells. It has become a social norm in the reservation and is self-reinforcing. In other words, when a user sees another person break a rule, it becomes much easier for them to follow suit and / or justify their own illegal actions. The report listed behaviors observed by users of The Fells that might contribute to conflicts (percent): Dog-owners allowing dogs off-leash 77%; Dog-owners not cleaning up after their dog 66%; Dogs misbehaving or threatening 33%; Hikers/snow-shoers being rude 22%; Mountain bikers passing too closely 18%; Hikers/snowshoers disrupting winter trail conditions 16%; Skiers not giving warning on approach 11%; Mountain bikers not yielding 9%.”*

It is interesting to read in the RMP that *“some behaviors were observed and reported differently by different groups. For example, cross-country skiers were much more likely to report hikers/snowshoers disrupting winter trail conditions (58%) than other groups were. Hikers/snowshoers were much more likely to report mountain bikers not yielding (17%) than other groups. However, some behaviors, such as dog-owners allowing dogs off-leash and owners not picking up after their dogs, were reported similarly by all groups. The research further explored whether or not recreationists experienced conflict as a result of these behaviors. The most prevalent conflicts centered on dogs. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of users experienced conflict with owners not picking up after their dogs (including 66% of dog-owners). Fifty-six*

percent (56%) of users reported experiencing conflicts with dogs off-leash at The Fells (including 42% of dog owners). Thirty-eight percent (38%) experienced conflict with misbehaving or threatening dogs (including 31% of dog-owners) and 45% experienced conflict with dogs disrupting trail conditions. Users reported relatively low, but notable levels of conflict with certain mountain biking behaviors (15%-19%); people also reported relatively low, but notable levels of conflict with hikers/snowshoers behavior (14%-17%) and with skiers behavior (13%-17%). Very few people experienced conflict with runners.”

DCR conducted trailhead counts from the fall of 2009 to spring 2011, both mid-week and weekend, at four trailhead access points. “Initial counts did not differentiate walkers with dogs from walkers without dogs, but did record the number of dogs and whether on- or off-leash. Overall, 45% of users were walkers/hikers, with or without dogs. Dogs actually outnumbered hikers, and of those observed, over 85% were off-leash. A review of all incidents for this period revealed that in total there were 19 dog-related incidents including 4 recorded bites or attacks and 1 mountain bike-related complaint. A winter trail use study during the 2010 - 2011 winter season found dog-walkers to be the largest group of users (45%), followed by snowshoers / walkers (35%), cross-country skiers (15%), with runners and mountain bikers at only 2% each.”

Commercial Dog Walking and walking a dog off-leash on trails are 2 of the 14 activities occurring in the park that are violations of DCR policy. “DCR staff has observed that the majority of these dogs are not under effective voice command of their owners. Voice command requires that dogs be in sight and under control of their owners at all times. Effective voice command means that a dog will come immediately when called the first time. Enforcement, compliance and monitoring are significant and complex management issues that need to be addressed around dog management at The Fells whether or not off-leash opportunities are allowed. Dog waste and the number of dogs per person also are significant issues. DCR has typically done limited enforcement or education around leash violations at The Fells.”

The newly designated 5-acre off-leash area at the Sheepfold opened September 24, 2011; a maximum of 3 dogs per person limit is now noted on the DCR web page. Signs will list rules of conduct for the off-leash area and also alert members of the public who want to avoid it. Among the rules of conduct, dog owners are required to pick up after their pet. Failure to clean up one's dog waste could result in a ticket, which can be issued by DCR rangers, State Police, environmental police or local police. DCR ranger citations can range from \$25 to \$200. Read more: Off-leash dog park opens at Sheepfold in Middlesex Fells - Winchester, MA - The Winchester Star  
<http://www.wickedlocal.com/winchester/features/x463300491/Off-leash-dog-park-opens-at-Sheepfold-in-Middlesex-Fells#ixzz1gNc3pGOA>

## Urban Cities and Towns

Boston.com has a fairly accurate listing of Pet-Friendly parks and trails for Boston, Brookline, Cambridge and Somerville at [http://www.boston.com/travel/explorene/specials/pets/dog\\_parks/](http://www.boston.com/travel/explorene/specials/pets/dog_parks/). In Boston, 17 of the 20 parks listed require that dogs be leashed. Along with gardens, a playground, sports and arts, the 5-acre Peters Park in the South End also has the first city-sanctioned off leash dog-park, the Joe Wex Dog Recreation Space (DRS) ([www.peterspark.org/dog-run/](http://www.peterspark.org/dog-run/)). Open in November 2007 and privately funded, the DRS is a 13,000 sq. ft. – less than 1/3 of an acre – enclosed space. Dogs must be leashed in the South End, and in Peters Park, unless they are in the DRS space. Another dog run is a converted tennis court; the third is a poorly maintained area on a traffic median on Storrow Drive.

Brookline has implemented the Green Dog program in all 13 parks listed; another has been added since. There is a limit of 3 dogs per person, Green Dog fees are doubled for non-residents and hours vary ([www.brooklinema.gov/GreenDog](http://www.brooklinema.gov/GreenDog)). Only Cambridge residents are welcome to use the 4 off-leash areas (2 shared/2 dedicated) listed, with two more (1 of each) in pilot ([www.cambridgedog.org/](http://www.cambridgedog.org/) and [www2.cambridgema.gov/cdd/cp/parks/offleash/](http://www2.cambridgema.gov/cdd/cp/parks/offleash/)) there. In Somerville, 8 of the 9 parks listed require that dogs be leashed; 2 more Parks now offer off-leash areas since this list was published (<http://www.somdog.org/>)

Dog owners who live in other towns with virtually no space for residents to exercise their pets (Weymouth, Hull, Quincy) now have many resources to help them to form a Dog Owners Group. Googling "start a dog park" returns 120,000 results. Some are selling „how-to“ books, but [www.areavibes.com/library/how-to-start-dog-park](http://www.areavibes.com/library/how-to-start-dog-park) and <http://dogplay.com/Activities/dogpark.html> how seem like two good places to start.

When looking at the long lists of rules at these small public “dog parks” and OLRAs, it becomes harder to understand how some dog owners believe that they can treat Bare Cove Park like an extension of their own property and ignore standard rules for acceptable canine behavior. It seems that the list of rules is longer and more

detailed the longer the “dog park” has been open. All require waste pick-up, current tags, leashes at entrance and exit, verbal control and in-sight within the space. Some specify that only spayed/neutered dogs are allowed, some specify age minimums, all ban dogs that are aggressive or in-heat. Many limit the number of dogs per person to 2 or 3. More are requiring that owners register to use the space – providing name and address/proof of residency along with license and veterinary information – and that the dog wears the proof of registration prominently. Many of these spaces are charging a fee for each dog and have been able to hire extra staff to monitor behavior with the proceeds, along with enforcing the rules with fines.

Posting BIGGER signs at the BCP park entrance gates listing clear rules and fines should make some thoughtless dog owners aware of the appropriate behavior needed to walk with a dog in public, helping to keep Bare Cove Park safe and clean for everyone.

Though research proves otherwise, there are people who want to believe that there are places other than their own property where dogs can run free without being properly supervised by a responsible person. For some unknown reason, these people want to believe that any public space where dogs are allowed is a “Dog Park”, where canine “pack behavior” – barking, growling at and humping other dogs (and people), jumping, digging, running out-of-control, etc. – is also allowed, and that somebody else will clean-up any dog waste they leave behind. Many of these people act as though they are entitled to use these public spaces with their dogs, by assuming waste pick-up bags will be provided, expecting other visitors to yield to them on the roads, letting their dogs approach (and sometimes intimidate) other people and pets without any sign of welcome, allowing dogs to lag behind (oblivious to the deposit also left behind) and romp out-of sight.

Though no survey like the one at The Fells has ever been taken here, Bare Cove Park does get many visitors with dogs, some from as far away as Waltham, the North Shore and the Cape. Many are good dog owners, but others are inexperienced or misinformed, and there are also more than a few local chronic offenders. There are “bad apples” in every group; policies and rules are made, posted and enforced primarily because of these people. It’s a normal

and natural behavior for infants to shriek or toddlers to be rambunctious, but neither is appropriate at a wedding ceremony or in a nice restaurant. It is understandable that a motorcycle enthusiast wants to rev the engine of a lovingly-restored classic Triumph, but not appreciated when they do it under a neighbor's bedroom window at 6:00AM on a Saturday. When bad behavior happens once and the parties are reasonable, there is no problem. A second offense may be bad luck; patience may be tried, but not lost. But when the offense continues, patience evaporates, complaints are made or authorities notified. By the same token, canine pack behavior may be normal and natural, but owners who allow it in a public park show a lack of concern for the safety and comfort of others. Not picking-up dog waste – in a park or anywhere – is disgusting and against the law. The Bare Cove Park Committee's patience, along with neighbors' and visitors', has been tried and lost.

It is important to understand that there are many good dog owners who bring well-trained and socialized pets to Bare Cove Park, and also that these good owners do not appreciate the behavior of those who will not control their dogs or pick-up after them. The organizer of the End of Summer Classic Road Race – the proceeds benefit the Park – is a dog owner. Time, materials and skills to build and install the gate at the Beal St. entrance were donated by a dog owner, as were the lawn signs reinforcing rules for good canine behavior in the Park. The Triangle Garden was created, and is still maintained, by people who met and became friends while walking their dogs in this Park.

Commercial Dog Walkers have been using this public land for profit for many years. Until recently, only a handful of these entrepreneurs would bring 3 or 4 dogs for off-leash exercise; there were complaints in years past also, but they typically managed to keep a low profile. There is clearly a market for these services, as evidenced by the increased number of canine clients (6-8) now being brought to Bare Cove Park. Some dog walking businesses advertise "playgroups in the park" here and other local spaces. Unless the provider has a grooming business or a kennel license, commercial dog walking is not subject to any inspection or oversight. Owners who use dog-walking services want to believe that their pets are being cared for by a "dog whisperer" who has special skills when it comes to canines. However, these owners would likely be surprised at all the yelling and screaming that goes on as the walkers try – and often fail – to control the large groups of dogs they bring here several times daily. Classes



and playground recess at the South Shore Conservatory have been disrupted regularly throughout the school day by the noise and the dogs that run on to the property. Advertised rates for dog walking services in a park range from \$15-\$25 per dog for each 45-60 minute session; a tidy sum at 6-12 dogs, 3-5 times per day, 4-6 days per week, 40+ weeks per year. Unlike DCR parks, Bare Cove Park does not have a permitting process to regulate for-profit activities on public land. Permission has only been asked once since 2007 – for a summer week-end dog wash in the main parking lot – and the requestor was referred to the Board of Selectmen for permission. Though the Committee itself had no problem with this summer activity, where a small portion of the proceeds would be donated to an animal group, permission was not granted by the Board.

Articles published by local GateHouse Media show that Duxbury disallowed a commercial dog walker to do business on one of the public properties there in 2008, after complaints about too many dogs; an In-Home Doggie Daycare facility was later denied to this well-known canine professional by Pembroke. This successful entrepreneur has since established a Training and On-Premises Doggie Daycare business in commercial property in Kingston. On-Premises Doggie Daycare – such as “A Fox and Hounds” in Hingham, “Land of Pawz” and “Doggieritaville” in Weymouth – usually provides four to six hours of socialization and play for the dog in a secure setting for about the same fee charged by Dog Walking businesses using public parks. Some of these provide pick-up and drop-off or are open longer hours to accommodate clients’ work-days. The market for these services remains strong, and many commercial properties are looking for tenants in this economy. On December 1 2011, the Town of Hull granted a zoning variance for a dog playgroup business on a former boatyard property. As more public spaces limit the number of dogs per person or for-profit businesses using public land, there are models for commercial dog walkers to change their businesses to On-Premises Doggie Daycare (or In-Home Doggie Daycare when the neighbors don’t mind).

A well-trained dog is a happy dog, a joy to its owner, a pleasure to other dog lovers, and a relief to Public Safety officials. A poorly trained dog makes most people uncomfortable, and an untrained 40lb+ dog out in public may even be considered a menace by reasonable people. With proper training and socialization, any dog can be a wonderful outdoor companion, on- or off-leash. Training exercises are designed to benefit both the owner and the dog. People passing often smile or may stop to chat when they see a good dog owner walking with a well-behaved dog, and usually frown and move away when they meet the opposite.

Research proves that there are standard rules for acceptable behavior when a dog is anywhere but the owner's property, along with acceptable practices at individual Parks. The issue is the level of experience and training needed as situations become more complex. Minimal experience is needed to train a dog to sit for a treat in the owner's kitchen or to play in the owner's fenced property; basic training and manners are required to play in a public fenced-in area. More time and repetition is required to control a dog on-leash in public with many distractions, and a dog owner needs significantly more time and training to control a dog off-leash walking near traffic or in a large Park with many distractions and minimal fence. Training a dog requires time, and patience; books and free on-line sources are plentiful.

There are many Dog Training classes available within a 50 mile radius of Hingham; it is hard to understand owners who won't use them:

- Petco: 22 stores, including Hanover, Quincy, Avon, Norwood, Dedham and Plymouth
- PetsMart: 14 stores, including Braintree, Hanover and Brockton
- Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (noted by ASPCA) ([www.ccpdt.org/](http://www.ccpdt.org/)); 80 certified trainers, including 1 in each of the following: Scituate, Randolph, Marshfield, Hanson & Pembroke
- National K9 Dog Trainers Association (<http://nk9dta.com/>): 18 trainers, including 1 in each of the following: Braintree, Cohasset, Norwell, Rockland and Hanson

□ International Association of Canine Professionals ([www.canineprofessionals.com](http://www.canineprofessionals.com)): 23 trainers, including 1 in each of the following: Norwell, Pembroke, Rockland, East Bridgewater, and Halifax.

□ The Community Calendar section in The Patriot Ledger often lists dog training classes offered at local town Recreation Centers; local veterinarians, ACOs or animal shelters may be willing and able to provide a referral.

A leash is the tried-and-true tool for dog training and control; it is one of the first purchases or gifts that every dog owner gets, along with food, bowls, collar, bedding, toys and treats. Electronic collars (e-collars; sometimes marketed as „wireless collars“) are gaining in popularity, perhaps because Baby Boomers and others lack the stamina or patience to control some younger dogs until they grow out of puppyhood, but the 6“-7“ leash remains the standard for going to the vet or walking with a dog in all other Parks and Towns surveyed. The ASPCA does not condone the use of e-collars except in the most extreme cases ([www.asPCA.org/about-us/policy-positions/training-aids-and-methods.aspx](http://www.asPCA.org/about-us/policy-positions/training-aids-and-methods.aspx) and <http://aspcabehavior.org/articles/84/Teaching-Your-Dog-to-Come-When-Called-.aspx>), and never without the help of an experienced trainer. There is concern among dog lovers in cyberspace that, in the wrong hands, “zapping” a dog with electric current will make a good dog bad and a bad dog worse. A traditional leash – leather, chain, cotton or nylon mesh – is easy to carry, easy to use, readily available and easy to spot; hands-free leashes are marketed to joggers, hikers and runners. It is not easy to determine if an e-collar battery is dead, or if the out-of-sight dog is also out-of-range, making the collar practically useless. Currently, there is no compelling reason to allow an e-collar as anything but a supplement to – not a replacement for – a conventional leash while walking with a dog in Bare Cove Park.